

What is claimed is:

1. In an information distribution system comprising provider equipment and subscriber equipment, said provider equipment providing information
5 to said subscriber equipment via a forward channel, said subscriber equipment requesting said information via a back channel, a method comprising the steps of:
determining whether said information distribution system has
sufficient bandwidth available to provide information requested by a
10 subscriber;
providing, in the event of appropriate bandwidth availability, said
requested information to said subscriber using said appropriate bandwidth;
and
providing, in the event of minimum bandwidth availability, said
15 requested information to said subscriber using said minimum bandwidth.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
waiting, in the event of less than minimum bandwidth availability,
for a predetermined period of time; and
20 repeating said first and second steps of providing said requested
information.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
repeating, for a predetermined number of iterations, said step of
25 waiting and said first and second steps of providing said requested
information.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of denying access
to said information to said requesting subscriber.
- 30 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said bandwidth determination is
made with respect to at least one of a video server bandwidth, a video switch
bandwidth a transport processor bandwidth and a digital video modulator
bandwidth.
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6. The method of claim 1, wherein a first level of bandwidth is allocated to each subscriber upon establishing a session, said first level of bandwidth being sufficient to support a navigation function.
- 5 7. The method of claim 1, wherein said requested information is stored in said provider equipment at an appropriate bandwidth level and at a minimum bandwidth level.
8. In an information distribution system comprising provider equipment
10 and subscriber equipment, said provider equipment providing information to said subscriber equipment via a forward channel, said subscriber equipment requesting said information via a back channel, provider equipment apparatus comprising:
a session manager, for receiving information requests from said
15 subscriber equipment and determining, for each received information request, whether said information distribution system has sufficient bandwidth available to provide the requested information; and
an information server, coupled to said session manager, for providing
said requested information at an appropriate bandwidth in the case of
20 appropriate bandwidth availability, and for providing said requested information at a minimal bandwidth in the case of at least minimal bandwidth availability.
9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein:
25 said session manager, in response to a determination that less than a minimum bandwidth is available, waiting for a predetermined period of time and determining, for each received information request not being fulfilled, whether said information distribution system has sufficient bandwidth available to provide the requested information.
- 30 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:
said session manager, in response to a final determination that less than a minimum bandwidth is available, denying access to said information to said requesting subscriber.

11. The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:
a transport processor, for packetizing information provided by said
information server;
said session manager determining said information distribution
5 system bandwidth with respect to at least a bandwidth utilization level of
said transport processor.
12. The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:
a plurality of data storage devices, coupled to said information server
10 via a video switch;
said session manager determining said information distribution
system bandwidth with respect to at least one a bandwidth utilization level
of said video switch and a bandwidth utilization level of a storage devices
including said requested information.
13. The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:
a digital video modulator, for modulating packetized information
streams onto a carrier;
said session manager determining said information distribution
20 system bandwidth with respect to a bandwidth utilization level of said
digital video modulator.
14. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein a first level of bandwidth is
allocated to each subscriber upon establishing a session, said first level of
25 bandwidth being sufficient to support a navigation function.
15. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said requested information is
stored in said provider equipment at an appropriate bandwidth level and at
a minimum bandwidth level.
16. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein each program to be provided to
requesting subscribers is stored at each of an appropriate encoded bitrate
and a minimal encoded bitrate.

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